

# American Higher Education : Issues and Initiatives\*

Carl A. Backman

## ABSTRACT

This article includes :

- An overview of the scope and size of American higher education,
- Identification of major issues confronting American higher education, and
- Descriptions of some of the changes and initiatives in Florida's system of higher education as they relate to these issues.

### 1. Overview of the Scope and Size of American Higher Education

As is the case in Japan, education beyond high school in the United States takes many forms : short programs to train for specific occupations, two-year technical programs, two-year university preparatory programs, four-year bachelor's degree programs, master's degree programs, doctoral study, and post-graduate education. One major difference between American and Japanese higher education is that the United States has no national university system and no national governance of higher education. Governance of higher education is the responsibility of the 50 states. Assurance of quality in higher education is also the responsibility of the states along with regional and discipline-focused accreditation agencies.

---

\* This paper was originally presented as a lecture at Wakayama University on October 2, 2001.

Before examining the major issues with which higher education must deal, we should examine some background information about schooling in the United States and some statistics related to American higher education.

America's public schools are organized around children's ages and grade levels:

- Pre-school, which is voluntary, is available for children from birth to age 5;
- Kindergarten is mandatory in many states and serves children ages 5-6;
- Elementary schools include grades 1-6 or sometimes 1-5;
- Junior high schools and middle schools include grades 7-9 or grades 6-8;
- Senior high schools include grades 9-12 or 10-12.

Most students are 17 or 18 years old when they complete high school with approximately 80% of school age youth actually completing high school and receiving a regular high school diploma. Another 5-6% earn the equivalent of a high school diploma through the GED (General Educational Development) testing program. Of those who graduate from high school, approximately 75% pursue some form of postsecondary education within two years of high school graduation.

The United States has four basic types of higher education institutions: universities, colleges, junior/community colleges, and vocational-technical institutes.

- Vocational-technical institute programs focus on training for specific occupations with training programs taking anywhere from one to two months to two years to complete. Completers are usually awarded a "certificate" or a "diploma."
- Junior colleges, which are also often called community colleges, offer two year programs leading to the associate's degree. Some programs prepare for specific occupations; others prepare for further study at a college or university.

- Colleges offer four-year programs leading to the bachelor's degree, with some colleges also offering master's degree programs.
- Universities offer four-year programs leading to the bachelor's degree and graduate level programs leading to the master's degree. The research universities offer programs leading to the doctoral degree.

Approximately 60% of the students who attend Florida's public universities complete their first two years of college level studies at a junior college.

American higher education institutions may also be classified according to their principal source of funding: national, public, and independent or private institutions.

- As noted earlier the United States has no national system of higher education. There are, however, several national college-level institutions, most of which are related to the United States military. For example, West Point Military Academy. These institutions are funded by the federal government.
- Public colleges and universities receive most of their funding through a combination of student tuition, city or state tax revenues, and private donations.
- Independent, or private institutions, receive most of their funding from tuition and private donations. Some of these institutions are affiliated with religious groups and receive funding from their church organizations.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], in the late 1990s there were more than 4000\* degree granting junior colleges, colleges, and universities (including branch campuses) in the United States. Of these :

- Approximately 1700 are publicly supported, including the federally funded institutions.
- Approximately 2360 are independently supported private institutions.

If we separate the institutions by two- and four-year status, there are approxi-

---

\* Institutions eligible to participate in federal Title IV financial aid programs.

mately :

- 610 public four-year institutions (which includes colleges and universities);
- 1090 public two-year institutions;
- 1700 private four-year institutions; and
- 660 private two-year institutions.

The total number of students enrolled in junior colleges, colleges, and universities in the fall of 1999 exceeded 14,790,000 :

- 12,681,231 undergraduates;
- 1,806,803 graduate students; and
- 303,190 in professional studies, such as law and medicine. [CHE, p.7]

Approximately 3.5% of the students enrolled in American colleges and universities come from countries other than the United States. For fall semester 1999 this number was approximately 516,400\* of which 46,872 were from Japan. Japan has the second largest number of enrollees in American colleges and universities. More than 70 countries each send more than 1000 college and university students to the United States each year. [CHE, pp.7, 24]

American higher education is a substantial contributor to the American economy with total expenditures in the range of \$200,000,000,000 including all expenditures for academic programs, student financial aid, and research. Using the most recent available figures, the expenditures by type of institution were as follows:

- By public institutions \$125,978,073,000 for 1996-97
- By private institutions \$70,951,662,000 for 1995-96 [CHE, p.30]

## 2. Issues Facing American Higher Education

Let us now turn to a review of ten of the major issues facing American higher

---

\* Students classified as “non-resident aliens”.

education :

- Institutional financing
- Economic and workforce development
- Access to higher education
- Student financial aid
- Faculty
- Education reform activities
- Information technology
- Athletics
- Governance
- Public perceptions of higher education

This list of issues was compiled from a review of recent publications of the

- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [AGB],
- *Chronicle of Higher Education* [CHE],
- National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education [NCPPE], and
- National Education Association of the United States [NEA].

#### a. Institutional financing

The period 1995-2000 brought great prosperity to American education through increases in state and federal spending, and especially through private giving to college and university foundations. Even before the events of September 11, there was growing concern about the state and federal governments' ability to continue current levels of funding for higher education. "Economic stagnation or recession could lead to reduced spending for higher education and for higher tuition in both the public and private sector." [AGB, p.4] With the economic slowdown accelerated because of the national and international uncertainties, higher education is likely to see budget reductions similar to those that occurred in the

1970s and early 1990s. [AGB, pp.4-6; CHE, p.16; NEA, pp.29-35; NCPPHE, Section 8]

For the past few years the United States federal government and many individual states, including Florida, saw tax revenues soar creating substantial budget surpluses. Many states, including Florida, enacted substantial tax cuts to curry favor with taxpayers. Now that the economy has turned many states are faced with substantial declines in tax revenues. In the fourth quarter of 2001, the Governor of Florida called two special sessions of the Florida Legislature to deal with a budget shortfall on the order of \$800,000,000 to \$1,300,000,000 in a state budget originally authorized at \$51,200,000,000. Florida has no tax on personal income and relies heavily on sales taxes and corporate income taxes. With tourism down significantly since September 11, Florida, as well as many other states, has been confronted with a major budget crisis.

In 2001, the United States Congress enacted and President Bush signed into law substantial reductions in personal income tax liability. In the late summer and early autumn of 2001, tax rebate checks were sent to American taxpayers-up to \$300 for single individuals and \$600 for married couples. Federal dollars available for higher education may have to be reduced because of the reduced tax revenues coupled with the huge sums of money pledged to support the “War on Terrorism,” assist New York City rebuild the area in the vicinity of the World Trade Center, repair the Pentagon, and support the American airline industry. [AGB, pp.3-4]

Substantial numbers of students rely on state and federal scholarships and loans to pay the costs of going to colleges and universities. [See discussion of student financial aid below.]

Much of the greatness of American colleges and universities derives from their first-class research programs. For fiscal 1999, approximately two-thirds of

the total college and university research and development funding for science and engineering (\$27,489,061,000) came from state and federal governments. [CHE, p.7]

For the past ten years higher education has been the beneficiary of substantial private giving and extraordinary high returns on stock investments held by college and university foundations. These funds allowed institutions to expand facilities and keep in bounds the tuition burden on students through increased student financial aid. In light of the current economic situation, it is very likely that giving will decrease. And, it is a near certainty that the stock market gains of the past decade will not be repeated any time soon. The value of university endowments has dropped significantly. [AGB, p.5]

#### b. Economic and workforce development

For many years higher education has been considered a major factor in economic and workforce development. Communities want higher education institutions located in their regions because they help attract business and industry and because they educate and train today's workforce. [AGB, pp.10-11] According the National Education Association, 2001 Higher Education Issues Survey [NEA, pp. i-ii, 7-18], the states want and expect higher education to :

- (1) "Strengthen and diversify the economy" by attracting new business and industry.
- (2) "Prepare and train a high-skill, high-wage workforce" to work in the new businesses and industries states and communities are trying to attract.
- (3) "Raise the level of educational attainment of the state's population."

Almost every job that pays a reasonable salary requires at least two years of education beyond high school. If a state or community cannot produce workers with the needed levels of educational attainment, it can neither

keep nor attract new business and industry.

- (4) Respond to changes in the workforce much more quickly than has been the case in the past. New degree programs need to come on line much more quickly and existing programs need to be modified to reflect increases in knowledge and changes in technology.

### c. Access to higher education

Among the major questions facing American higher education are: “Who gets to go to college? Who gets the benefits that come from completing degrees?” Access to higher education has long been a major concern of the American civil rights movement.

Until the end of World War II higher education in America was generally accessible to only the privileged few. Following the War higher education opportunities expanded greatly with the return of American military personnel. The nation recognized the need for a more highly educated citizenry especially in the sciences and mathematics. Educational opportunities for women expanded with there now being more women than men enrolled in America’s higher education institutions.

Underrepresented in this expansion of higher education opportunities were the nation’s minorities: African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. The decade of the 1960s saw tremendous gains in civil rights and educational opportunities for these minority groups. At both the national and state levels “Affirmative Action” policies and programs were created to increase the number of minorities in higher education and entering high-skill, high-wage employment. For higher education these measures included special admission policies, targeted financial aid programs, and academic support programs. Today, these special programs are being called into question and several states—including Flori



da—have eliminated race-based admission criteria for entry into public colleges and universities. There is concern among minorities that the gains of the past 30 years will be undermined without continuation of these special supports. [AGB, pp.6-8; NEA, pp.19-21]

Admission to public colleges and universities is usually based in large measure on successful completion of a standard college preparatory high school curriculum, high school grades, scores on college entrance examinations, and other achievement factors. There is now considerable debate as to whether the current entrance examinations are appropriate and effective for selecting individuals who have a reasonable chance of being successful in college and university studies. [CHE, p.16]

Additionally, where colleges and universities are located, and at what time of day and on what days of the week programs are offered, have much to do with who can attend. The majority of American students work while attending college. Many believe and demand that colleges and universities need to be located within reasonable commuting distance of where students live and work. Some look toward the new technologies-such as the Internet-as a means of bringing a college-level education within physical reach of place-bound students.

#### d. Student financial aid

Highly related to issues of access is student financial aid. Simply put, one cannot attend a college or university if you cannot afford the costs involved. In 1999-2000, nearly 39% of American college students receive some form of federal financial assistance to attend college; 16% receive support from their states; and 15% receive support from their institutions. [CHE, p.18] Both public and private institutions have tried to offset increases in tuition with increases in available financial aid. [AGB, pp.8-10; CHE, p.16; NCPHE, Section 7; NEA pp.

24-28]

There continues to be conflict between government policy makers as to the appropriate balance between the two major types of financial aid :

- Need-based aid-related to a student's and the student's family's income and other financial resources, and
- Merit-based awards-related to and seen as a reward for a student's academic performance.

Student financial aid is often a combination of four different types of aid :

- Scholarships/grants-no repayment obligations
- Loans—with repayment obligations
- College Work Study-salary for campus and/or community work
- Tuition tax credits-reduction of a portion of income tax liability

At issue are :

- (1) funding levels that the state and federal governments are willing to support, and
- (2) which forms of financial aid should be given funding priority.

Merit-based scholarships and grants tend to favor middle- and high-income families. Need-based grants tend to favor low-income families. However, need-based loans for students from low-income families can lead to heavy financial burdens following college, especially if the graduate does not secure a high-paying position.

There are a growing number of scholarship-loan programs linked to preparation for critical need occupations-such as teaching, nursing, and technology. Several states, including Florida, have created what are called “forgivable loan programs.” For each year that the graduate actually works in the target occupation, a percentage of the loan is forgiven. Such programs are usually available to students regardless of financial need. [CHE, p.16]

#### e. Faculty

“State legislatures increasingly see faculty as central to their efforts to enhance institutional quality” [NEA, p.18]. However, there is growing concern that there may not be sufficient qualified faculty to fill the number of positions needed over the next ten years.

American higher education expanded greatly in the late 1960s and early 1970s with thousands of new faculty hired in those years. These faculty members have now attained or are rapidly approaching retirement age. With enrollments in higher education expanding sharply there looms a shortage of qualified faculty to replace those who are retiring and fill the new positions that will need to be created.

Additionally, colleges and universities have not been able to keep faculty salaries at levels that make college and university teaching more attractive than other positions requiring similar levels of knowledge and expertise. Higher education is experiencing a “brain-drain.” Many highly qualified faculty are being drawn away by more appealing situations in business and industry. [CHE, p.16]

#### f. Education reform activities

In the mid 1960s American business and industry became disenchanted with the results of American public schooling. The Russian launch of the first man-made satellite led to scathing criticism of mathematics and science teaching in the schools. Since that time public schooling has been engaged in education reform efforts that include :

- specifying increasingly higher standards for curriculum content and expected student learning;
- requiring testing at key grade levels in key subjects with student promotion and graduation tied to test results, and with teacher evaluation linked to the

performance of the teacher's students on the tests; and

- developing accountability systems that link budget enhancements to district and school performance on student achievement tests. [NCPPE, Sections 1-4]

For the past 30 years universities have been sheltered from many of these reform activities. Approximately ten years ago many states moved to tie junior college funding to development of programs that responded to workforce needs and to the numbers of students who actually found employment in the occupations for which they trained. Many state legislatures have now set their sights on taking the standards, testing, and accountability movement to the universities. [AGB, pp.18-19]

Reform of American public schools-kindergarten through grade 12-needs to be the subject of another article. However, there are two aspects of the K-12 reform that directly relate to issues facing higher education.

Too many students who enter colleges and universities are not ready for college-level work. Too many students have not taken the high school courses they need for successful participation in college. High school curricula and graduation requirements need to be strengthened to include more mathematics, science, world history, geography, reading, writing, and second language instruction. Too many students who complete what was to have been a college-ready curriculum require remedial instruction before they can be successful in college. Of particular concern are student skills in mathematics, reading, and writing. [NEA, pp.22-23]

Almost everyone agrees that you cannot expect students to learn and attain high academic achievement levels if they do not have a well-qualified teacher. Many school districts in the United States face critical shortages of fully qualified teachers, especially in the fields of mathematics, science, foreign languages,

and special education. Universities are being asked improve teacher education by:

- preparing more teachers, and
- increasing the content preparation of the teachers they prepare. [AGB, pp. 14-16; CHE, p.16; NCPPE, Section 5; NEA, pp.23-24]

**g. Information technology**

“Given the close links between information technology and trends in learning and economic development, society must ensure greater access to technology and eliminate barriers to growth” [AGB, p.12]. Higher education institutions, like the states in which they are located, must confront the so-called “digital divide.” Access to technology-including both equipment and training-must be made available to those who cannot afford it. Otherwise we are going to create a society divided between those who have access to information and those who do not. [AGB, pp.12-14; NCPPE, Section 9]

Colleges and universities are experimenting with new delivery systems both on campuses and at remote locations. Higher education institutions are exploring uses of the Internet and other technology systems for :

- improving instruction, and
- making higher education accessible to more people.

Florida has created the Florida Virtual High School and the Florida Virtual Campus (for postsecondary college-level credit), and participates with the other southeastern states to make college-level instruction available through distance learning across the southeastern region.

The new technologies have generated a considerable number of questions about student and faculty rights and responsibilities when using the new technology. For example, who owns the rights to instructional materials faculty produce

for use with Internet-based courses? What are student obligations with respect to guaranteeing to instructors that the work they submit through distance learning technologies is their own and not that of someone else?

#### h. Athletics

Perhaps more than in any other country in the world, American society has an inordinate fascination with intercollegiate athletics especially American football, basketball, and baseball. Among the many athletics related concerns that face American higher education, two stand out:

- How to restore a more appropriate balance between the primary mission of colleges and universities-academic studies-and sports programs? [AGB, pp.19-21]
- How to increase the graduation rate among athletes-especially basketball and football; how to restore academic integrity to athletic programs?

#### i. Governance

Many states have introduced significant changes in the way in which public education is governed. These changes are being made in response to two pressures that appear on the surface to be directly opposed to one another. [AGB, pp. 5-6; CHE, p.16; NCPPE, Section 1]

On the one hand, education governance is being centralized across all sectors of education-public schools, junior colleges, and universities. The principal goal of centralizing governance is to increase the quality of education statewide by promoting greater coordination and cooperation across the sectors. The state becomes more involved in setting goals, formulating strategic plans, and establishing performance expectations.

On the other hand, education governance is being decentralized with greater

autonomy given to local institutions. As institutions have become more accountable for outcomes, they have been given greater freedom to determine how they will achieve these expected outcomes. Because the state no longer dictates procedure, the state absolves itself of responsibility for the performance of individual institutions. The state, however, must still assume responsibility for providing adequate funding to the institutions if the schools, colleges, and universities are to have a reasonable chance of succeeding in attaining the state prescribed goals and objectives.

The recent changes in governance of public education in Florida provide an excellent illustration of the direction such changes are taking with the new catch-words being “seamlessness” and “devolution of authority.” Figure 1 outlines Florida’s educational governance system as it existed before July 1, 2001. The *italicized* lettering indicates governing bodies or officials that were elected; the **bold faced** lettering those that were appointed. Note that the 10 public universities in Florida’s State University System (SUS) were governed by one board called the Board of Regents). The universities had no local boards. Note also that the Florida Community College System (CCS) had a centralized coordinating board (called the State Board of Community Colleges). Each community college (CC) had its own local governing board.

Figure 2 outlines the situation as it will exist in January, 2003. The asterisks (\*) indicate major changes from 2001. Note that now nearly every governing body and every official is appointed (except for local school boards and some superintendents). Note also that the centralized governing board for the university system and the coordinating board for the community college system are gone. Each of the universities and the community colleges now has a separate local board of trustees. The new State Board of Education not only has policy- and rule-making authority, but also will develop the “seamless” K-20

(kindergarten through graduate school) strategic plan and a coordinated K-20 budget. The Governor of Florida appoints the members of the State Board of Education and the members of each of the university and community college boards of trustees. The State Board of Education selects and appoints the Commissioner. The position of Chancellor of the State University System no longer exists; the new position of Chancellor now reports to the Commissioner and is the head of the Division of Colleges and Universities. The position of Executive Director of the Florida Community College System no longer exists; the new position of Chancellor now reports to the Commissioner and is the head of the Division of Community Colleges. There has been added the position of Chancellor of the Division of Public Schools reporting to the Commissioner.

Figure 1. Education Governance in Florida Prior to July 1, 2001

Unit/Function	Governance Body	Administrator
Policy and Rules	<i>State Board of Education</i>	<i>Commissioner</i>
SUS	<b>Board of Regents</b>	<b>Chancellor</b>
University		<b>President</b>
CCS	<b>State Board of Community Colleges</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>
CC	<b>Board of Trustees</b>	<b>President</b>
School District	<i>School Board</i>	<i>Superintendent</i> <sup>+</sup>
		<b>Superintendent</b> <sup>+</sup>
School		<b>Principal</b> .

+Some superintendents are elected and some are appointed by the local school board.



Figure 2. Education Governance in Florida After January 3, 2003

Unit/Function	Governance Body	Administrator
Policy and Rules	<b>*State Board of Education</b>	<b>*Commissioner</b>
*DCU	*	<b>*Chancellor</b>
University	<b>*Board of Trustees</b>	<b>President</b>
CCS	*	<b>*Chancellor</b>
CC	<b>Board of Trustees</b>	<b>President</b>
*K-12		<b>*Chancellor</b>
School District	<i>School Board</i>	<i>Superintendent</i> <sup>+</sup> <b>Superintendent</b> <sup>+</sup>
School		<b>Principal</b> .

+Some superintendents are elected and some are appointed by the local school board.

Thus, we see in Florida's new governance system both greater centralization of governance to achieve "seamlessness" between the sectors and greater decentralization of governance to achieve "devolution of authority" for local decision-making.

#### j. Public perceptions of higher education

Finally, we need to look at the public's perception of higher education. There is no question about the high value placed on higher education for preparing people for high-skill, high-wage occupations. However, many key public figures have begun to question whether higher education is preparing students well enough to participate in a democratic society. Some believe higher education has become too preoccupied with job training and economic development and more attention should be given to developing the knowledge and skills associated with civic responsibility. [AGB, pp.16-17; NEA, p.16]

There are many business and industry leaders who believe that higher educa-

tion-especially the universities-are much too slow in modernizing the curriculum and bringing online new courses and degree programs needed for sustained economic and workforce development. Higher education is not seen as being responsive. [NEA, pp.11-14]

With increases in tuition, increases in length of time required to complete degrees, and continuing requests for increases in state and federal support, there is greater public interest in holding institutions accountable for the public funds they receive and for keeping costs under control.

As the United States becomes more deeply engaged in the “War on Terrorism,” a new set of concerns about higher education is appearing on the horizon. American colleges and universities are among the staunchest advocates of the United States Constitution’s guarantees of free speech. One can be assured that it will be from some of the more visible campuses of the nation’s colleges and universities where criticisms of United States policy and actions are likely to be voiced. In the current political environment, such criticisms by faculty and students may be viewed as “unpatriotic” by other members of the public and lead to negative perceptions and diminished respect for higher education. “As policy makers, business leaders, and the public question whether higher education remains relevant to society’s needs, institutions will be pressed to highlight their contributions to the greater good” [AGB, p.16].

### 3. Where does American higher education go from here?

Five years ago the glass through which higher education looked was clear and the goal and the path to the goal bright and certain. Today the goal is no less certain :

Providing the highest levels of education, service, and research for personal growth, civic responsibility, cultural enhancement, economic

development, and national defense.

Today, however, the path is not so brightly lit. American higher education faces substantial challenges [AGB, pp.1-2; NEA, pp.37-43] as it seeks to maintain and enhance its world-class higher education systems through:

- Adequate funding
- Programs that promote economic and workforce development
- Equity in access
- Appropriate levels of student financial aid
- Quality faculty both in higher education and the public schools
- High standards and accountability
- Effective use of new technologies
- Balanced perspective on the role of athletics
- Governance structures that balance centralized control and institutional autonomy
- Highest public regard for the benefits and quality of higher education.

## REFERENCES

- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (2001). *Ten Public Policy Issues for Higher Education in 2001 and 2002*. Public Policy Paper Series No. 01-1. The Association: Washington, D. C. [AGB]  
< <http://www.agb.org> >
- Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac Issue 2001-2*. Volume XLVIII, Number 1 (August 31, 2001). The Chronicle: Washington, D. C. [CHE]  
< <http://www.chronicle.com> >
- McGuiness, Jr., Aims (2000). *Recent State Policy Initiatives in Higher Education: A Supplement to Measuring Up 2000*. National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education: San Jose, CA and Washington, D. C. [NCPHE]  
< <http://www.measuringup2000.highereducation.org/main.htm> >
- Ruppert, Sandra S. (2001). *Where Do We Go from Here: State Legislative Views on Higher Education in the New Millennium-Results of the 2001 Higher Education Issues Survey*. National Education Association of the United States: Washington, D. C..

[NEA]

< <http://www.nea.org> >

Tabs, E. D. (1999). *Postsecondary Institutions in the United States: 1997-98*. (Report No. NCES 1999-174). National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education: Washington, D. C. [NCES]

< <http://www.nces.ed.gov> >

#### AUTHOR NOTE

At the time this article was prepared Carl A. Backman was serving as Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Division of Colleges and Universities, Florida Board of Education (in Tallahassee, Florida) and as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, The University of West Florida (in Pensacola, Florida).

## バックマン氏の講演について

2001年10月2日、和歌山大学と交流協定を結んでいるフロリダ州立西フロリダ大学からバックマン博士が来学され、「アメリカ合衆国の高等教育―問題点と新構想」と題する講演をされた。当時、バックマン氏は西フロリダ大学で準副学長（Associate Vice President）を、フロリダ州教育委員会で教育改革担当副教育長（Vice Chancellor）の特別補佐を務められていた。

バックマン氏は9月末に大阪で開催される予定であった SEUS:Japan Conference（米国南東部/日本会議）に出席した後、和歌山大学に立ち寄り講演されることになっていた。9月11日の同時多発テロ事件の影響で会議の開催は見送られたが、バックマン氏は予定を少し遅らせ講演のために来日された。

講演では「アメリカ合衆国の教育制度」、「アメリカ合衆国の高等教育が直面している問題」、「高等教育改革に向けた新構想」、「フロリダ州における教育改革」について話をされた。日本における教育改革を考えるうえでたいへん参考になる話を聴かせていただいた。講演の最後に、「今回いろいろな人と話をして、アメリカ合衆国と日本における高等教育改革の方向が非常によく似ていることを知り驚いている。今後教育改革の分野でも交流を活発にして情報交換をしながら、共に改革を進めていきましょう」と語りかけられたのが強く印象に残っている。講演の詳しい内容については、本誌に掲載されたバックマン氏の論文をお読みいただきたい。

講演中、通訳をした筆者の不幸で肝心の後半部分に十分時間をかけていただくことができなかった。講演で話していただけなかった部分の要旨を、講演原稿をもとにまとめておく。

## 「高等教育改革に向けた新構想とフロリダ州における教育改革」

### 高等教育改革－教育水準・アチーブメントテスト・結果責任－

公立の小学校，中学校，高校では1960年代から次のような改革が進められている。

- ・カリキュラムの内容と学習到達目標の水準を高める。
- ・主要科目について，進級・卒業試験（アチーブメントテスト）を導入する。
- ・アチーブメントテストの結果と担当教員の評価をリンクさせる。
- ・地域や学校単位でのアチーブメントテストの結果と学校への予算配分をリンクさせる。

多くの州で，これらの制度の大学への導入を視野に入れた改革案が検討されている。

### 教育ガバナンスの改革－中央集権化・分権化－

現在，アメリカ合衆国の多くの州で公立の大学及び学校の管理体制に大きな変化が起こりつつある。これらの変化にはふたつの相反する側面がある。ひとつは中央集権化（centralizing governance）である。幼稚園から大学院まで（K-20）をすべて州で管理し，各セクターの連携を強化することによって，効率よく効果的で切れ目のない（“seamless”）教育を実現しようとしている。州教育委員会は教育目標の設定，K-20 教育戦略の策定，学習到達目標の決定，予算配分に関してより大きな権限をもつようになってきている。

中央集権化が進む一方で，個々の大学や学校への権限委譲も行われ始めている。これがもう一つの側面，分権化（decentralizing governance）である。分権化が進むと，大学や学校の管理・運営方法，あるいは教育委員会が設定した教育目標や学習到達目標を達成するための方策は，すべてそれぞれの教育機関に任されるようになる。教育機関はカリキュラムの改革や新たな課程・学位プログラムの“開発”などを自由に行うことができるようになるかわりに，結果責任を

負うことになる。州は大学や学校に管理・運営方法や教育方法について命令・指示をすることはなくなる。従って各教育機関の教育成果に対して州が責任を負う必要はなくなるが、目標達成のために必要な教育予算を配分する責任をもつことになる。

このような教育行政における中央集権化と分権化には、社会の変化に迅速に対応できる教育システムを州の責任において確立し、競争原理を導入することによって大学や学校に絶えず自己改革をさせようとする意図がある。フロリダ州で行われている教育改革はこうした改革の典型的な例である。

### フロリダ州における改革

バックマン氏の論文の中に 2001 年 7 月 3 日までの管理体制 (Figure 1) と改革後の新体制 (Figure 2) が示されている。新体制では州教育委員会の権限が強化されると同時に各大学や学校に評議員会 (Board of Trustees) が組織され権限が委譲されるようになる。州立大学システムを管理する中央組織 (Board of Regents) やコミュニティーカレッジシステムを管理する州の委員会 (State Board of Community Colleges) は廃止され、大学、コミュニティーカレッジ、公立学校を担当する教育長 (Chancellor) がそれぞれ各教育機関における成果を“形式的に”コミッショナーに報告する体制が取られる予定である。公立学校の評議員と一部の地方自治体の教育長を除いて、コミッショナー、州教育委員会のメンバー、大学やコミュニティーカレッジの評議員はすべて州知事の任命となる。

＜経済学部助教授 藤永 博＞